

Winter Transportation Committee
September 23, 2014

Members present: Ham Ross, Town Board Supervisor; David Aslyn, Superintendent, Bayfield School District; Steve Dunn, Maintenance Operations Supervisor, Bayfield School District; Gary Russell, Manager, Madeline Island Ferry Lines; Gary Krubsack, Citizen at Large (10:45am).
Ex-Officio: Arnie Nelson, Windsled Transportation, Inc and Madeline Island Transportation, Inc.

Members absent:

Town Staff present: Pete Clark, Town Administrator

Public present:

1. Call to order.

H. Ross called the meeting of the Winter Transportation Committee to order on September 23, 2014 at 10:30am. A quorum of the committee is present as reflected in the members listed above.

2. Orientation and Election of Officers.

Tabled until G. Krubsack is present.

3. Review previous Collaborative Agreement (2009) - discuss content and focus of new Collaborative Agreement (CA) or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

D. Aslyn will review the 2009 Collaborative Agreement which is in committee packets.

Motion by D. Aslyn to table the Collaborative Agreement until the next Winter Transportation Committee meeting, second, H. Ross. All in favor, all aye, motion carried.

4. Budget Discussion

Arnie has three separate contracts with the following entities: The School District of Bayfield, the Madeline Island Ferry Lines, Inc (MIFL) and the Town of La Pointe. When the winter transportation system was set up, he would send the bills to the Town. The Town would break the bills apart for the three entities and the committee would review the bills, including start up and shut down costs.

Arnie will report on how the machines are running and if there are any problems. The representatives will then report that information to their respective organizations.

Arnie said he thought the Big Sled (Ice Angel) was going to leak more than it did last year but they were not in the water that much. The floor boards will be pulled up to do a visual inspection. If there are no major cracks the sled will get through another year. If not, he will come back to the committee to see what will need to be done.

Arnie has suggested over the years that money be put aside for a new craft or major repair so that there would not be a large cost at one time. The money could be put in a special fund. If no major repairs are needed the money remains in the fund. He suggests that all the entities put money into this fund and if the entities agree, this could be written into each agreement.

G. Russell asked about grant prospects for a new sled. Pete Clark said Lisa Potswald, Planning and Zoning Administrator is researching the same program that was used to get the sleds we have now and also investigating a Winter Transportation Terminal building located closer to the approach.

Arnie contacted three companies to give a price on a new hull for the Big Sled. Only one company was interested and they wanted money to come here to look at the hull. A month after their review the company said it would not be cost effective to replace the hull and instead we should buy a new sled from them.

G. Krubsack is now present (10:45am).

G. Krubsack asked why we are dealing with this technology when there are companies that make perfectly good 30 passenger hovercrafts. With a hovercraft you would not have flex problems; you can land them in the water, they are extremely efficient and run with diesel engines.

Arnie said they have looked at hovercraft since the '70s. If you have a Hovercraft you are required to follow all the different Coast Guard regulations, including personnel. Personnel also have to be certified in hovercrafts. When you are hauling passengers and kids, it is a whole different scenario than what the Coast Guard is letting us run this toboggan on ice.

G. Krubsack said the people who build the Hovercraft would come here and train operators. Hovercraft are run with Cummins diesel engines; now we are dealing with antique technology we know doesn't work – you can't take a rigid unit and run it over an uneven surface without it flexing and breaking no matter what you make it out of. People in Sweden use hovercrafts; the military use them; they are used all over the world. They are not extremely fast - the one built in Miami only goes 35mph, has a 400 mile range, with a turbo charged Cummins diesel engine. There is a company in Canada, Van Air that makes a 19 passenger hovercraft for around \$400,000. This is a little different than a hovercraft made in warm climates because this one deals with icing up.

Pete Clark will look into hovercrafts, including costs and come back to the committee with costs and Coast Guard regulations.

a) General Operations Budget.

Arnie said the sleds were all running good at the end of the year. They will pull the panels and inspect the popped rivets in the Big Sled around Thanksgiving. Until that happens they will not know how much repairs will cost.

Liability insurance for the vans expires on November 15, 2015 and will not be renewed because the insurer has discontinued the underwriting of their stand alone commercial auto insurance product. Arnie said they are looking into other companies.

G. Russell asked if there would be anything that might make it possible not to run this season.

Arnie said there was a computer box problem; they might need a new tach.

G. Russell said in the past each entity put in \$7,000. \$4,000 of that \$7,000 went to start up and \$3,000 was for insurance for a total of \$21,000 as shown in the agreement. In reality, start up is actually \$12,000 (3 entities x \$4,000). Arnie said this has been the same number for years and requests an additional \$2,000 from each entity because costs are going up. If the money is not used, the money is reimbursed to each entity.

Motion by G. Russell that each party contribute \$3,000 more for a total of \$10,000 each which leaves \$30,000 for start up. Second, H. Ross. All in favor, all aye, motion carried.

b) Windsled Repair and Rehabilitation Budget

A. Nelson said there are no problems with the Husky sled, Nelson sled or the Winter Transportation building.

c) Discussion and preparation of Comprehensive Budget recommendations to respective governing bodies/entities

D. Aslyn urged the committee to develop a timeline for the next step in regards to the hull or the replacement of the Big Sled because 12 months from now a decision on how to go forward either by taking possession of a new craft or a comprehensive repair will need to be made. H. Ross said this needs to include a discussion about a hovercraft.

Pete Clark will work with Lisa Potswald to get a rough timeline together for the committee to consider.

D. Aslyn suggested planning backwards - when would a decision have to be made on a new craft or comprehensive repair in order to be ready by the spring of 2016, and then work back from that date. Arnie said we would want a new machine or the big sled repaired by the summer of 2016, unless something catastrophic happens to the hull this winter.

G. Russell said it would be very difficult to get the Federal Ferry Boat Discretionary grant and a craft built by that deadline. There is a chance there may be some money left over if the project is not that big, say \$300,000 or a little more since most of the big entities are awarded most of the grant. For the grant you have to have congressional support and no money will be awarded unless you know what you want and have good cost estimates from the builders.

Return to agenda item 2.

2. Election of Officers

Arnie leaves meeting (11:10am).

Motion by S. Dunn to nominate H. Ross as Chair of the Winter Transportation Committee, second, G. Krubsack. All in favor, all aye, motion carried.

Motion by H. Ross to nominate D. Aslyn as Vice Chair of the Winter Transportation Committee, second, G. Krubsack. All in favor, all aye, motion carried.

5. Schedule Next Meeting

Meeting scheduled for Wednesday, October 15, 2014 at 10:30 am.

Research will begin on a new craft. To be noted, the hull must be U.S. made if the craft runs on water, but does not pertain to hulls that run on ice. Need to have the craft designated as a Windsled as it is now as opposed to a Windboat.

a) Agenda Items

Collaborative agreement, new craft options, inspection/repair updates.

6. Adjourn

Motion by G. Krubsack to adjourn second, H. Ross, all in favor, all aye, motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 11:20am.

Minutes taken from recorder and respectfully submitted by Kathy Erickson, Clerical Assistant
Approved as presented October 15, 2014